

these proposals differ in details, they are consistent in showing that if we give workers the opportunity to invest a portion of their wages in personal accounts, Social Security will be able to offer higher benefits than would otherwise be the case.

To repeat what I told Congress in the State of the Union Address this year: “As we continue to work together to keep Social Security strong and reliable, we must offer younger workers a chance to invest in retirement accounts that they will control and they will own.”

Social Security protects beneficiaries with disabilities, retirees, widows, and widowers. It also affects the lives of millions of tax-paying workers, the beneficiaries of tomorrow. As the report makes clear, Social Security faces long-term problems that demand bipartisan solutions.

I hope that Members of Congress will join with the Social Security Administration and other interested parties in a national dialog about how best to strengthen and protect Social Security. I look forward to working with Congress to see that Social Security remains sound and strong for today’s and tomorrow’s retirees.

Message on the Observance of Saint Patrick’s Day, 2003

March 17, 2003

I send greetings to those celebrating St. Patrick’s Day.

On this day, we honor the life of Patrick, patron saint of Ireland, and celebrate the rich history of the Emerald Isle. St. Patrick escaped from slavery and dedicated his life to helping others through his words and actions. His example of courage, determination, and faith captured the hearts of the Irish and continues to inspire countless people around the world.

In the United States, this day gives us an opportunity to recognize the vital contributions of Irish Americans. Throughout our history, America has welcomed millions of Irish immigrants to our country. These individuals have transformed our national identity and strengthened our families, our communities, and our national character.

Today, approximately one in four Americans can trace their ancestry in part to Ireland’s green shores. We are proud of our deep and lasting ties to Ireland and are grateful for the many Irish Americans who continue to enrich our Nation.

Laura joins me in sending our best wishes for a happy St. Patrick’s Day.

George W. Bush

NOTE: An original was not available for verification of the content of this message.

Address to the Nation on Iraq

March 17, 2003

My fellow citizens, events in Iraq have now reached the final days of decision. For more than a decade, the United States and other nations have pursued patient and honorable efforts to disarm the Iraqi regime without war. That regime pledged to reveal and destroy all its weapons of mass destruction as a condition for ending the Persian Gulf war in 1991.

Since then, the world has engaged in 12 years of diplomacy. We have passed more than a dozen resolutions in the United Nations Security Council. We have sent hundreds of weapons inspectors to oversee the disarmament of Iraq. Our good faith has not been returned.

The Iraqi regime has used diplomacy as a ploy to gain time and advantage. It has uniformly defied Security Council resolutions demanding full disarmament. Over the years, U.N. weapon inspectors have been threatened by Iraqi officials, electronically bugged, and systematically deceived. Peaceful efforts to disarm the Iraqi regime have failed again and again because we are not dealing with peaceful men.

Intelligence gathered by this and other governments leaves no doubt that the Iraq regime continues to possess and conceal some of the most lethal weapons ever devised. This regime has already used weapons of mass destruction against Iraq’s neighbors and against Iraq’s people.

The regime has a history of reckless aggression in the Middle East. It has a deep hatred of America and our friends. And it